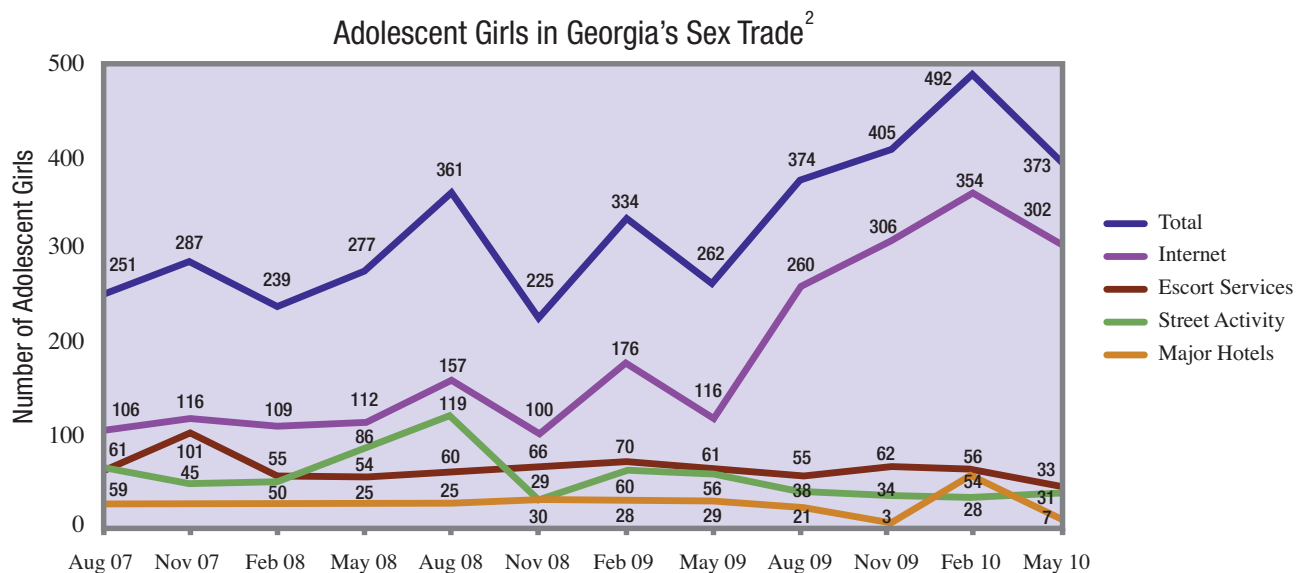




Georgia's Sex Trade Problem

In 2005, the FBI named Atlanta as one of 14 cities in the nation with the highest incidence of children used in prostitution. Each month, approximately three to five hundred girls are commercially sexually exploited throughout Georgia and research has indicated that the average age of entry is between 12 and 14 years old.¹ Exploited girls do not self-identify as victims, and deny victimization due to fear of the physical and psychological abuse inflicted by the trafficker/pimp, as well as trauma bonds developed through the victimization process.



RESEARCH

- Victims who have experienced emotional and psychological difficulties are at a greater risk for being sexually exploited³
- In most cases of girls who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation, there is an extensive history of running away from home⁴
- Entry into the juvenile justice system may actually disqualify commercially exploited children from accessing victim of crime funds and specialized mental health services to address exploitation issues⁵

A Statewide System to Protect Georgia's Children

Recognizing this as a serious problem in Georgia, the Governor's Office for Children and Families (GOCF) created *the nation's first statewide response* to identify child sex trafficking victims and address their needs.

¹ Smith, L. A., Vardaman, S. H., & Snow, M. A. (2009). *The National Report on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: America's Prostituted Children*. Vancouver, WA: Shared Hope International.

² Schapiro Group, T. (2010) *Adolescent Girls In Georgia's Sex Trade: Tracking Study Results*. Atlanta, GA: The Schapiro Group.

³ Klain, E.J. (1999). "Prostitution of Children and Child-Sex Tourism: An Analysis of Domestic and International Responses", National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, U.S. Department of Justice.

⁴ Chesney-Lind M, Sheldon R. (1992). *Girls, Delinquency, Juvenile Justice*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

⁵ Priebe, A., & Suhr, C. (2005). *Hidden in Plain View: The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Girls in Atlanta*. Atlanta, GA: Atlanta Women's Agenda.

Who is a child sex trafficking victim?

A child who has received food, drugs, money or shelter in exchange for sex



Georgia Care Connection Office

In 2009, support and advocacy by GOCF led to the creation of the Georgia Care Connection Office (GCCO). In collaboration with the Gwinnet Rockdale Community Service Board, GCCO coordinates a comprehensive care plan for victims and links individuals to services that best meet physical and emotional needs. The office serves a critical role as it offers a single point of contact for anyone who seeks help for a sex-trafficked child. GCCO also provides information and technical assistance in its efforts to support victims, family members, community members, law enforcement, medical personnel and service providers.

Working in partnership with state and national organizations, GCCO proactively tracks both actual and potential sexually exploited children and helps "connect the dots" of the child's actions to identify opportunities for intervention.

To connect with this office, visit www.georgiacareconnection.com or call 404-602-0068



Task Force for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Georgia

In 2008, a task force was developed in order to reduce commercial sexual exploitation of children by promoting multi-disciplinary collaborations among public and private sectors to align resources that foster successful prevention, intervention and prosecution strategies. The work group will address awareness and training, program funding, the system of care for victims and evaluation process and outcomes.

"When I entered the Victory Program I had no plans to reunite with my family or finish high school. As a result of my individual counseling and academic work. I am going home today and will graduate with my high school class."

– Child victim of commercial sexual exploitation served by Georgia Care Connection and Victory Program.

Sandy Springs Sex Trafficking Assessment Team

Sandy Springs Sex Trafficking Assessment Team (STAT) is the *nation's first partnership that brings together law enforcement, state government and a children's hospital* to provide expert victim advocate support, forensic interview services and medical exams for victims of sex trafficking.

As soon as police officers or detectives of the SSPD identify a child whom they suspect to be a victim of sex trafficking, they engage the victim advocate and take the child to the Child Protection Center at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta for an exploitation-specific forensic interview and medical exam. The child is simultaneously referred to the GCCO for treatment services. The Sandy Springs Victim advocate remains engaged with the child and their family as the investigation proceeds to bring the trafficker to justice. *No other comprehensive support system exists in this country for victims of sex trafficking.*

GOCF is excited about this latest collaborative effort in furthering the initiative to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Georgia. As the facilitator of the statewide response, GOCF believes that the STAT is another landmark action to form public and private partnerships to address the needs of these victims, and vital community partners are needed to sustain these children throughout the recovery process.

How Can You Help?

In order for these efforts to continue to succeed, support from the local community is necessary. As a community, we can help identify possible victims and get them into care.

POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS:

- **Branding or tattooing:** victims branded by their pimp with tattoos that include a male name or initials, street name, gang or money symbols; these are often found on legs, neck, chest, hands or arms (*this is one of the ways that pimps maintain physical and psychological control over emotionally vulnerable girls*)
- **An older boyfriend or male friend or relative**
- **Withdrawn and uncommunicative**
- **Possession of large amounts of money** (*girls turn the money over to the pimp*)
- **Poor personal hygiene and/or inappropriate dress**
- **Runaway or lack of adult supervision/support**

If you suspect a child is a victim of commercial sexual exploitation, please contact GCCO at 404-602-0068.

Calling the care connection office links the family to supportive services but does not fulfill mandatory reporting of child sexual exploitation as required by Senate Bill 69